UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/ICEF/1995/NGO/2
18 May 1995

ENGLISH ONLY

FOR INFORMATION

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND
Executive Board
Annual session 1995
22-26 May 1995

STATEMENT OF ROTARY INTERNATIONAL TO THE 1995 ANNUAL SESSION OF THE UNICEF EXECUTIVE BOARD

1. It is an honour to announce today that the Rotary Award for World Understanding has been awarded to the late James P. Grant, former Executive Director of UNICEF. This award, established in 1980, is bestowed upon a person who has provided distinguished service, through humanitarian efforts, to the cause of international understanding and peace. Previous recipients include former United Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, former United States President Jimmy Carter, Pope John Paul II, and Vaclav Havel, President of the Czech Republic.

2. The award will be accepted formally by UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy on 12 June at the Rotary International Convention to be held in France. The award includes a $100,000 gift from The Rotary Foundation of Rotary International, which may be used to further the work for which the award winner is honoured.

3. With unparalleled energy and zeal, Jim Grant stormed the parapets of childhood disease with the low-cost weapons of vaccine, oral rehydration therapy and nutritional supplements. He was a friend to Rotary, helping to establish Rotary International, with its 1.2 million community leaders in 184 countries, as full partners in the war on vaccine-preventable diseases.

4. Rotary, through its PolioPlus programme, has contributed more than $200 million dollars for the purchase of polio vaccine and has mobilized thousands of volunteers to help bring vaccines and children together. The resulting partnership, which has been called one of the greatest public/private initiatives in history, has achieved great progress in the war against polio. One hundred and forty-five nations reported zero polio cases last year, an increase from 84 countries just 10 years earlier.

5. Rotary International urges UNICEF and all other partners, including Governments, to continue to devote the financial and technical resources needed to achieve the goal of polio eradication by the year 2000. Global eradication will require that all polio-endemic countries implement national immunization days and other strategies recommended by the World Health Organization by 1997.

6. Rotary will give polio eradication its highest priority. It will provide an additional contribution of more $100 millions towards that effort, plus continued community-level support in the maintenance of immunization levels, national immunization days, surveillance, mopping-up vaccination campaigns, and advocacy among Governments and corporations.

7. The world is on the threshold of victory over the dread disease of polio. When that war is won, the world will save some $1 billion each year when polio immunization no longer becomes necessary. In addition, immense human suffering will be relieved.

8. A victory over polio will provide an important milestone in medical history. Polio would then join smallpox as the second disease to be eradicated from this planet. Such a victory will spur the resolve of all nations to control and eradicate other infectious diseases which today take such a terrible toll among the world's children.